



No. 48

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April 1988

A Tribute to Mothers

Michael R. Gilstrap

*Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her —*
Proverbs 31:28

As she leans against the back of the heavy door, through which she had just thrown her son out of her house, Monica weeps uncontrollably. She can't help thinking, **"I screamed at my son."** Overcome with pain, all she can do is stumble into her room, fall down on her knees, and begin to pray.

A thousand **different** thoughts run through her **mind as she pours her heart out** to God. Lurking among the team and anguish is the **terrible thought**, “Have I done the right thing? Will I ever see him again? Will the stand I’ve taken do any good?”

A few hours later, sitting on the window sill overlooking the garden, Monica is still on the verge of tears. The breathtaking view of the Setting sun is unnoticed. Her grief would not be greater if she shed tears for the bodily death of her son, rather than his spiritual death. "How could he have done it?," she cries.

Aurelius had arrived a week ago from his teaching position at Carthage. Monica knew he was hiding something, but had no idea it would be this bad. At first she assumed he had met a girl, and was embarrassed and unsure of how to discuss the subject with his mother.

But then, as she was cleaning his mom this rooming, she noticed the book by the eastern mystic, **Mani. Immediately** she confronted her son. **“Why** do you have this book?”, she **asked**, “Have you denied the faith?” Stunned by his mother’s **discovery**, Aurelius **replied**, “But. . . but. . . mother, you don’t **understand.**”

“Is Christianity now a myth to you?”, she said as she moved toward him “Are the Bible stories I told you when you **were** a child only fables? Is Jesus just a **great** teacher?”

Seeing the bathing and anger in his mother's eyes, Aurelius tried to explain, but it was no use. The

more he said the angrier she became. Finally Monica exploded. Losing control she screamed at her son, "Blasphemer!", and pushed him out the front door.

Now, sitting on the window sill, she couldn't believe what she had done. Monica just knew she had lost her son forever. Being reared austere in a Christian home, she clung tenaciously to traditional practices. His blasphemous rejection of Christianity was something she could not abide, but. . . oh, how she loved her Son! & tears flowed ever more freely.

Sleep did not **come** easily that evening. Her heart was broken and the pain was almost more than she could bear. Sometime during the night, however, while she was deep asleep, she dreamed a dream. In her dream Monica was standing on a wooden rule. Coming toward her was a young man with a halo. He smiled at her in joy. As he approached her he asked, 'what's Wrong? why do you cry?'

She replied, "I weep for my dead son. He's dead insin. . . he left the faith." Wiping away some of her tears, the young man replied that she should take heart. If she looked carefully, she would see that where she was, there was her son also! And when she

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looked, she saw Aurelius standing beside her on the same rule.

Upon awakening the next *g, Monica vividly remembered her dream. She was sure it was a message from the Lord. Realizing the rule where she and Aurelius had been standing was the "rule of faith," Monica took great comfort in what she believed God was telling her: Aurelius may deny the faith today, but one day he will repent and come back to Christ.

Monica held onto that dream for nine years, because it would be nine years before Aurelius converted to Christianity. During those nine years, however, Monica's faith never wavered. As Aurelius was to remark many years later, "she pursued me like a hound from heaven."

And we can all thank God that she did, because Monica's full name is Monica Augustinus. Her son, Aurelius Augustinus, is better known to us as Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, the man most Church historians regard as one of the most influential figures in the history of Christianity.

Augustine was converted nine years after his falling away, and he went on to become one of the central pillars upon which our entire Western civilization is built. *Time* magazine noted in its September 29, 1986 issue that Augustine, in each of the 16 centuries since his conversion, has continued to exert a "ma. intellectual, spiritual, and cultural force." As a Church father, he wrote more than 1,000 total works, including 242 books. Today in North Africa there is little of Augustine's world left, and even less of his religion, but he is still referred to locally as *Rumi Kabir*—"The Great Christian."

It may truthfully be argued that apart from Jesus Christ and Paul, there is no more important a figure in Church history than Aurelius Augustinus, son of Monica. Yet, if it weren't for Monica's dogged determination to see her son brought to Christ . . . if it weren't for Monica's dream to see her son work for the Kingdom of God, there never would have been an Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

A Mother's Love

"A hound from heaven" isn't a very flattering description, but I think every mother can identify with Monica's love for her son. That dogged determination and unflinching commitment to her son led Monica to follow Augustine halfway across the Roman Empire. It's a kind of love that's unique to Mothers.

We fathers have a tendency to try to settle matters too quickly. If our solutions don't work, we

get frustrated and give up. Our attitude in general is that our son or daughter needs to get out into the world and take his or her lumps. It'll do 'em good! We love our children deeply, but we love them as fathers. From where I sit, there's a great deal of mystery surrounding a mother's love.

A mother's a lot like a bear with her cubs. Threaten one of her babies and all you're going to see are teeth and claws — and you won't see that for long! Put one of her children in danger and she'll flat put your lights out!

Monica looked at Augustine's apostasy like a mother. She saw Manicheism as a threat to her son's well-being. She didn't take it personally, but her love drove her to lash out at the danger.

***. . .a Mother. Unselfishness,
undying love, and a depth of
commitment to her children that is
marvelous to witness.***

As a father, I have to be honest. I don't think I would have responded in the same way. Sure, I would have pitched him out with a lot of screaming and yelling. Later I would have wept for my son as well. It would have deeply grieved me to see my son turn away from Christ, but deep down inside, I think I would have viewed Augustine's apostasy as a betrayal. He turned away from me — my son rejected my authority. My response would have been mixed with anger at the personal humiliation I felt because my son left the faith of his father.

But that was not Monica's response, and I venture to say that would not have been any Christian mother's response. She was angry to be sure, angry at her son and his stupidity. But more importantly, she was fiercely angry at the source of danger. She thought not of herself even in the slightest way. Her attention — the entire focus of her love — was centered on Augustine, and what she must do to save her son from danger. Monica would do anything to help her son.

That, more than anything else, characterizes a Mother. Unselfishness, undying love, and a depth of commitment to her children that is marvelous to witness. An old yiddish proverb says, "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." The theology's lousy, but the sentiment rings true: *Mothers are always there.* As a father and a son, I can only stand in awe..

Eucharist and Judgment

Peter J. Leithart

Through the centuries, a rich store of eucharistic legend has developed within the church catholic. Already in his 9th-century Eucharistic controversy with Ratramnus, Radbertus was able to cite incident after incident in which unrepentant sinners were punished immediately and severely for unworthy participation in the Sacrament.

During the Middle Ages, it became a widespread practice for the Eucharist to be used even in civil ordeals to test the guilt of the accused. Gregory of Tours tells of a Count Eulalius who had been accused of killing his nagging mother while she was at prayer. The Count was cut off from the Sacrament, but he protested that he had not received a fair trial. In response, Cautinus, Bishop of Clermont, agreed to admit him, but issued this warning as Eulalius approached the altar:

It is common talk among people that you killed your own mother. I do not know whether or not you really committed this crime. I therefore leave it to God . . . to judge this matter. If you are really innocent, as you maintain, draw near, take your portion of the consecrated bread and place it in your mouth. God will be looking into the deepest confines of your heart. (*History of the Franks*, X.8).

Eulalius ate the bread without incident, and the charges were apparently dropped.

Bishop William of Utrecht, who excommunicated Pope Gregory in 1076, fared less well in the Eucharistic ordeal. At the end of the excommunication rite, "he audaciously took the Host, [and] it turned to fire within him, and, shrieking 'I bum! I bum!', he fell down and miserably died" (Henry Charles Lea, *The Ordeal* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, [1866] 1973, p. 105). The civil use of the Eucharist is attested as late as the seventeenth century.

The medieval use of the Eucharist judgment was thickly overgrown with layers of superstition. The Eucharist was evidently viewed in quasi-magical terms, and the medieval chroniclers, not unlike modern journalists, were attracted to the bizarre.

Still, we should not dismiss the medieval practice lightly, nor automatically assume that the legends are utter falsehoods. In fact, these rites indicate that the medieval church understood an important aspect of the Eucharist, one that does not appear to be particularly prominent in modern evangelical piety. We hear the echoes of Paul's warning to the

Corinthian church in Cautinus's solemn adjuration to Eulalius (1 Cor. 11:27-32). Even a cursory glance at these verses, which contain Paul's most extensive discussion of the Supper, shows that they are replete with judicial language. Whoever eats and drinks unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Whoever eats without judging the body "eats and drinks judgment to himself." If we judge ourselves rightly, then the Sacrament becomes a means of discipline, and we are not judged with the world. Clearly, for Paul, judgment was not an incidental aspect of the Eucharist. He understood the Supper as a judgment, as an instrument refining and purging the church and the individual believer, and therefore as a very serious discipline.

What is the theology behind this understanding of the Eucharist? It may be viewed from several different angles. First, the Eucharist is a foretaste of the eternal kingdom of the consummation. It is a token and "earnest" of the final wedding feast. But the final kingdom comes in judgment as well as in recreation. Two feasts are prepared: the Supper of the Lamb, and the feast of the birds of prey, who feed on the slain bodies of the armies of the Beast (Rev. 19:9, 17-18). Thus, if the blessedness of the final kingdom is provisionally present in the Eucharist, the fire of God's judgment maybe said to be present also.

Second, we can view the Eucharist as a repetition of our baptismal oath and ordeal. This is the view adopted by C.F.D. Moule, who calls self-examination and the Eucharist a "fresh acceptance of God's verdict on sin." We saw in the last essay in this series that baptism is an acceptance of judgment. Similarly in the Eucharist, we take judgment upon ourselves. This judgment is unto destruction if we are unworthy, and unto restoration if we are repentant.

There is significant practical value in understanding the Eucharist in judicial terms. As we have emphasized in several earlier installments of this series, an emphasis on the judicial aspects of theology helps to prevent an unbiblical subjectivism from entering into our thinking. A judicial understanding of the sacraments has the same effect. We Protestants tend to allow the qualifications of sacramental theology to undermine the theology itself. We tend to speak far more of what baptism does not do, and what is not present in the Eucharist than about what the sacraments do accomplish. This emphasis was defensible and necessary in the sixteenth century, but its relevance in the twentieth century is debatable. In any case, a judicial understanding of the

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The End of the World

Studies in Genesis One

James B. Jordan

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for appointed times, and for days, and for years." (Genesis 1:14)

The astral bodies are signs of the rulers of the world, for they themselves are said to "govern" day and night (Gen. 1:16, 18). Accordingly, sun, moon, and stars are found on the flags and seals of many of the nations of the world, including our own. Moreover, since the astral bodies are also clocks, they symbolize the tides of the nations. The fall of stars, the darkening of sun and moon, can be and often are a sign of the collapse of a given nation.

We saw last time that in Isaiah 13, Babylon's stars ceased to shine, while Egypt's were occluded by God's cloud (Ezk. 32). This fits with the rest of what the Bible teaches, and with what we know of the ancient near east. The Babylonians worshipped the stars, and they were put out. The Egyptians had experienced Divine darkening before, at the Exodus, so that is what they were threatened with again.

Similar language is used prophetically concerning Israel, but with a twist. It is in the prophecy of Joel that we find this most clearly set out. Joel begins by reminding Israel of a recent plague of locusts. In his first chapter, he describes the horrors of the locust invasion. Then, in chapter two, he threatens the people with another locust plague, this time an invasion by human locusts. Such an invasion will be a manifestation of "the day of the LORD," that is, the day of judgment (21).

The expression "day" of the Lord refers to the rising of the sun — the sun of God's searching light that shows up sin and brings judgment, the sun of God's blazing heat that destroys sin. Yet for Israel, this "day" will be a "day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (2:2). The metaphor is "mixed," but apropos: When God brings His day, and evaluates their sin, He will cast them into darkness.

Accordingly, when God's locust army comes to judge Israel, "before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness" (2: 10). This is a reference to the collapse of Israel as a body politic. After all, Abraham had been told that his seed would

be like the stars of the heavens, and we have explored this imagery in previous lessons. Here we see an application of it. It is possible, though not provable, that the quaking earth refers to the Israelite citizenry, the trembling of the heavens to the Levites and priests (since the Temple was a symbol of heaven), and the darkening of the astral bodies to the royal court and other rulers in Israel.

If the people repent, however, God will return to them, and restore them (2:12ff). God promises them a great future. He promises them the coming of the Holy Spirit.

"And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind, and your sons and daughters will prophesy [-g_ Num 11:19], your old men will dream dreams, your young - will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour Out My Spirit in those days" (228-29). We know from Acts 2:16-18 that this was fulfilled at Pentecost.

"And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth" (2:30). This is connected with Pentecost, and was therefore a warning to the Jews of Peter's day. Wonders in the sky and on the earth is what is foretold. In reverse order, first we read of the earth: "Blood, fire, and columns of smoke." These are the phenomena of war. There will be war. There will be yet another invasion. This was fulfilled when the Romans invaded Palestine and destroyed Jerusalem, A.D. 66-70.

Wonders in the sky are also foretold: "the sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome &y of the LORD comes" (231). What is of interest here is the expression "moon into blood." In a solar eclipse the sun turns black, in a lunar eclipse the moon turns red. Thus, not merely a general darkening but an eclipse of powers is spoken of here. But more than that, the turning of the moon to "blood" points, I believe, to something particularly Jewish: the sacrificial system. If they will not accept the blood of Jesus Christ, the final Sacrifice, then they themselves will be turned into blood. "They will become the sacrifices. That is what the prophesied war is all about. That is what the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was all about.

But Joel is issuing a warning. Those who listen can escape. "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; for [just as Obadiah had already told you] 'on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape' (Obad. 17), as the LORD said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls" (2:32). Just as

Isaac escaped *death* on Mount **Zion**, because of the substitute ram that God provided (**Gen. 22:14**), so those **who trust in the Lamb of God will escape the destruction of Jerusalem** in A.D. 70. Such is Joel's warning, reiterated by **Peter** on the day of **Pentecost**.

And also **reiterated** by **John**. Prophesying this same **event**, the destruction of **Jerusalem**, John writes, "And I looked when He broke the sixth@ and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like **blood**; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind" (Rev. 6:12-13). The fig tree is a standard symbol for Israel, **especially** in this context (**Matt. 21:19**; 24:32-M, **Luke 21:29-32**). Both sackcloth and blood remind us of the **Levitical** system, the blood for **sacrifices**, and the sackcloth for the **mourning** associated with leprosy and uncleanness. (On this passage, see David Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*.)

In this way, the astral symbols are given peculiar coloring depending on context. The Babylonians worshiped the stars, and so they are extinguished. The Egyptians worshiped the sun, so God darkens it. The Jews were to maintain the sacrifices, so the moon is turned to blood.

To round out this discussion, we need only look at two more passages, briefly. After promising the coming of the Spirit and the judgment upon apostate Israel in Joel 2, God goes on to say in chapter 3 that He will shakedown all the nations of the world, and bring them to their knees. Speaking of the nations, He says that "the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness" (Joel 3:15).

Speaking of the same event, our Lord said that "immediately after the **tri** Won of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (**Matt. 24:29**; cf. **Mark 13:24-25**; **Luke 21:25**). This is not a reference to the destruction of **Jerusalem**, because it comes *immediately after* that event. It is rather a reference to the shaking of the nations (**Hag. 2:6**; **Heb. 12:26**). We notice that the language of blood is absent. It is simple extinction of these lights that is prophesied.

Failure to take careful note of context has misled some expositors into thinking that **Matthew 24:29** is speaking of the destruction of **Jerusalem**, but as we have seen, it cannot be. This is particularly clear in the parallel account in **Luke 21**, where we read that the Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will

be trampled underfoot by the **Gentile** until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the rearing of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (**Luke 21:24-26**).

"Immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, God began shaking down the nations, darkening their suns and moons, and replacing them with the light of the Sun of Righteousness, whose rising brings healing in His wings."

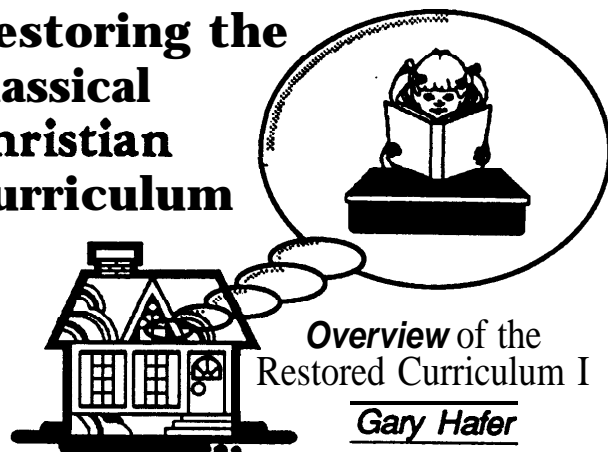
In conclusion, the symbolism of universal collapse, the extinction of the sun, moon, and stars, has reference to the fall of nations and empires. In the Old Testament, it was used for **Babylon**, for **Egypt**, for **Israel**, and for the nations in general. In the New Testament, it was used for **Israel** and also for the nations in general. At the destruction of **Jerusalem**, the Jewish sun went into black eclipse, mourning in sackcloth, and the Jewish moon went into red eclipse, the blood-red of sacrifice. Immediately after the destruction of **Jerusalem**, God began shaking down the nations, darkening their suns and moons, and replacing them with the light of the Sun of Righteousness, whose rising brings healing in His wings (**Mal. 4:2**).

[Bibliography: Unfortunately, the best stuff in print on **Matthew 24** misses the point of verse 29. Thus, on this particular matter I disagree with **Marcellus Kik's** *An Eschatology of Victory and with David Chilton's* interpretation in his three books. **Rushdoony**, in *Thy Kingdom Come*, has a short chapter on **Matthew 24**, and he does see verse 29 as the shaking of the nations. Otherwise, I can recommend my eleven-tape series on **Matthew 24**, available from **Geneva Ministries** for \$44.(X).]

Leithart, continued from page 3

Eucharist reminds us that the Eucharist is not a mere "aid to devotion" or a sentimental ritual. In the Supper we are judged and purged, and if we partake unworthily we are condemned and punished. The Eucharist, in short, is not something to be taken either lightly or infrequently.

Restoring the Classical Christian Curriculum



Now is an appropriate point in our discussion to gain some critical distance so as to see where the writing model is placed within the curriculum. Also, such a distancing approach is useful to see how integration among the various disciplines and subjects is achieved, and to discover how theology undergirds them all. In addition, it is time to pause and reflect over the imminent sections of the restored curriculum — thus far, the writing model — and grasp the significance of the transcendent, or whole, picture.

What do I mean by imminence and transcendence? In a certain sense, God speaks to man from a transcendent position. He is above all as the Creator, sovereign King of the universe. There are certain traits which God alone possesses, and theology has typically classified them as incommunicable attributes. Though incommunicable, they are nevertheless capable of being discussed in a limited way (or else systematic theology would be impossible!).

God is also imminent. Jesus Christ dwelled among men and conversed with them. He redeems His elect in a personal way, calling them to salvation before the foundation of the world was laid. Similarly, the Holy Spirit applies the work of redemption to us today and convicts us individually of sin.

Consequently, there is no conflict between God being imminent and transcendent; He holds both aspects in harmony, each being equally ultimate. This formulation is found in all the major creeds of Christendom. Could we then also say that creation — embossed with the very image of God — also manifests these same categories of transcendence and imminence, although lesser in degree?

It seems reasonable for us to answer affirmatively and to apply this observation directly to our academic concerns. Remember, Scripture com-

mands us to follow the heavenly blueprint (transcendence) in establishing patterns on earth (imminence). In our earthly context, we can equate ideas and theories as transcendent categories, for they force us to grapple with "higher" concerns, even prodding us to re-evaluate, prompting us to be continually reforming. Academic models or diagrams present us with this transcendent vision: the "big picture."

It can also be said that this transcendent distinction leads to a multiplicity of applications (imminence), concrete correlations of ideas and theories. Accordingly, a curriculum is construed to be a transcendent idea, with pedagogy and specific courses being the imminent application.

We can illustrate these categories in the figure below (see figure 1).

This figure does not represent a continuum, but rather, an illustration of the two categories that are held to be equally ultimate all times.

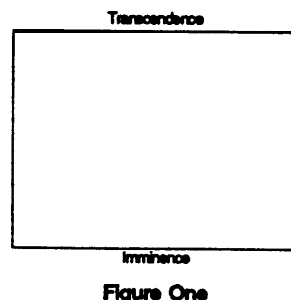


Figure One

Although one may be stressed at times over the other, there is never a time when one is eliminated at the expense of the other.

Our restored curriculum can be inserted in relation to these two categories by superimposing our creative model (including writing), discussed in

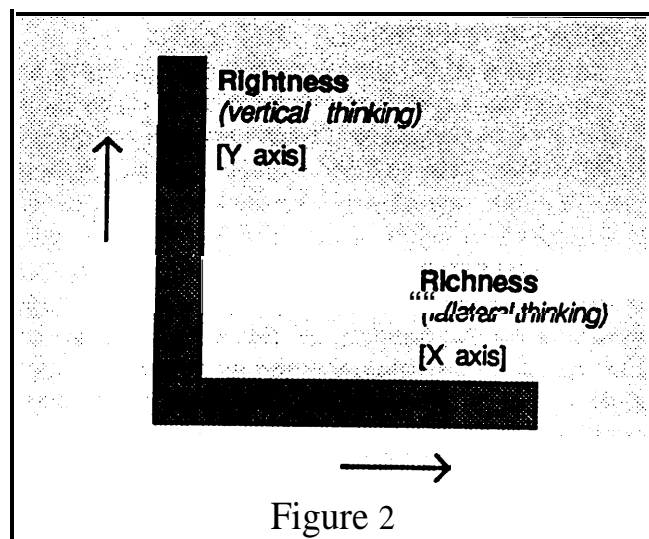


Figure 2

previous installments, over a portion of the model-rectangle (see figure 2).

Rightness is moving toward the transcendent

distinction, because we are always hoping to get the "big picture," and to see it ethically right. Pluralistic education eliminates this movement because it has no firm ground in Christian morality, and yet, we know it is indispensable, the very foundation of learning. St. Augustine made the ethical-theological that basis for his teaching on oratory (*On Christian Doctrine*, Book III).

Richness moves laterally along the imminent distinction, for it deals with the materials of creative thinking. As was explained in previous installments of this series, the static-dynamic-relative triad is used through writing in every course and concentrates on expanding the student's horizons.

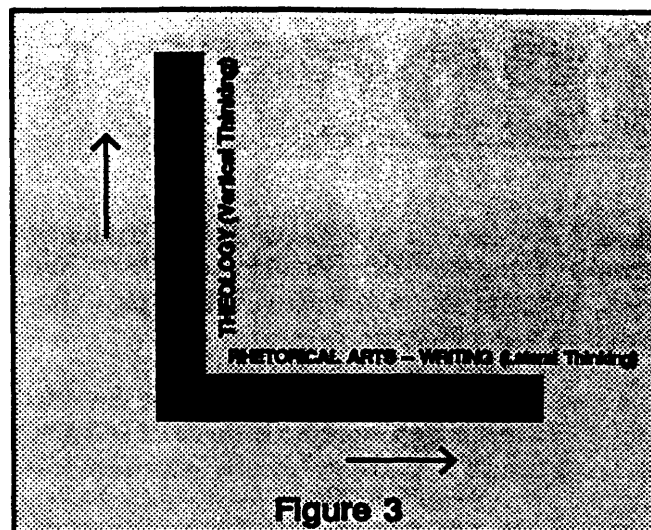
If you can conceive of these two perpendicular lines as being the two axes of a chart, any point plotted within them would have a relationship to *Rightness* (the y axis) and *Richness* (the x axis). The teacher's goal is to move the student vertically (ethically maturity and theological orthodoxy) and laterally (creativity). Creativity is useless if pursued in the wrong "direction," I believe this is a crucial aspect of any learning model. Most of our day scorn this distinction: most AIDS research which completely ignores the *Rightness* axis while pursuing the *Richness* axis at a feverish pace; and the liberal's penchant for coupling orthodoxy with "deadness", which in this trinitarian model, places the liberal at the very bottom of the vertical scale!

Thus, we can superimpose courses over these diagrammed thinking processes. *Theology* corresponds to *Rightness*, for it is a unique discipline, seeking to apply the Word of God to every area of life. It is always endeavoring to express the full counsel of God, and therefore, must be continually reforming. Its uniqueness as the "mistress science" is represented by its vertical positioning.

Rhetorical arts, which (again) are not strictly "subjects," are the very fabric of learning, since they aid the student in seeing new insights and new perspectives that are created through writing. These arts correspond to *richness* (see figure 3).

Now we have two courses, but what about the other two angles to complete the "rectangle?" The first one, corresponding to the static-dynamic-relative on the imminent side is grammar-dialectic-rhetoric on the transcendent side. It is not a course, but a scale that registers the age of the student, expresses his academic capabilities, and even tells the teacher how sophisticated his pedagogy should be.

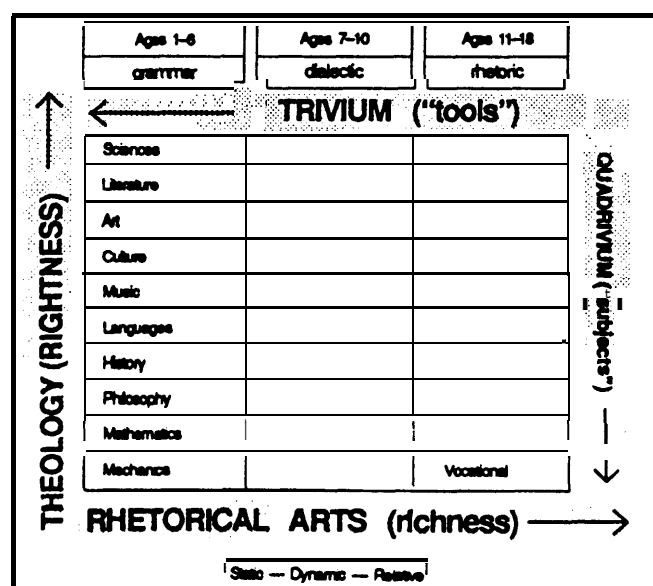
The last side contains the "Quadrivium," as the



medieval Christian curriculum termed it, or what is contemporarily known as "subjects." Each of the subjects is analyzed via the rhetorical arts, which appears along the imminent -OIL. It points downward because they subjects must never gain ascendancy over other subjects; that territory is the sole province of Theology. Like the Trivium distinction, it is not a subject, but a way of dividing the disciplines.

A whole spectrum of course are offered within the Trinitarian model; I've listed only a few. There is no hierarchy of subjects implied here: in other words, Sciences are not posited as superior subjects to Literature subjects. Ideally, if we had a three dimensional page, the subjects would line up parallel to one another, thus representing depth (below).

Next month, a concluding discussion of our model.



BOOKS

Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation by Tremper Longman III. (Zondervan, 1988). 164 pages, separate indexes, bibliography. (pb). Reviewed by Gary Hafer.

contributing to the consistency of the Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation series is Tremper Longman III's excellent *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. This volume marks the second of the new hermeneutical series edited by Moises Silva and also represents volume III of the "Foundations" set: a discussion of literary critical methods used in interpreting the

The unity of this series thus far is nothing short of astounding. In volume I, Moises Silva's *Has the Church Misread the Bible?* (reviewed by Michael Gilstrap, *The Geneva Review*, February 1988), the series editor raises some important modern questions regarding biblical interpretation, outlining the parameters of inquiry and problems encountered in twentieth century interpretation. Longman follows on the coattails of Silva's literary questioning by surveying literary critical methods that have been

introduced into biblical hermeneutics, all the while critiquing and evaluating such methods biblically and in layman's language.

Longman's presentation is refreshing. Most literary approaches to biblical concerns usually end up defending the literary school of interpretation at the expense of the text's integrity. Leland Ryken's archetypal criticism advocated in *How to Read the Bible as Literature, as good as it is, is still submitted to scrutiny here, with fruitful results.*

In addition, Longman is at home in the interpretative realm. He points out that most theologians only half-heartedly study a literary theory before they begin applying it in their exegesis, chiefly because of the monumental difficulty of mastering two fields — theology and literary theory — norredly results in a superficial study of the latter. Longman shows that it can be done profitably, however, by noting the limitations of each critical school before stressing the reading processes involved in literary "readings." In this sense, the book is not simply another critique, but an affirmation of literary technique, all accomplished within the purview of inerrancy.

So often Christians think that literary readings of Scripture imply a depreciation of both it and its message. But CS. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers proved otherwise; Longman Continues in this fine tradition.